

REMARKS

A minor informality in the specification has been corrected, as indicated above.

Claims 1-38¹ were pending in the application. Upon entry of this Response, claims 1, 3-23, 29 and 31-38 will be presented for further examination, claims 2, 24-28 and 30 having been canceled in this paper.

Rejections under 35 USC § 102(e)

Claims 1, 3-10, 13-23, 29 and 31-36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,418,372 ("Hofmann").

Before explicitly addressing the pending rejections, applicants will first compare some aspects of the directional system of the Hofmann reference with aspects of the significantly different system disclosed in the present patent application.

In Hofmann's system, a user 40 inputs a desired destination into a portable device 30 carried by the user 40 (column 3, lines 46-48). The portable device 30 communicates the desired destination to a direction indicator 20 (next to which the user is standing), and the indicator then illuminates an arrow on a floor, wall or pedestal, etc. (FIG. 1) to visually signal the proper direction of movement to the user (column 3, line 64 to column 4, line 8) to guide the user toward the desired destination.

In the system disclosed in the present application, as in Hofmann's system, the user carries a portable communication device and inputs a desired destination into the portable device. Via a wireless link, the portable communication device transmits the desired destination to a central server (not to a local indicator as in Hofmann's system). In the system of the present invention, the central server is able to detect the location of the portable communication device. Based on the detected location of the portable communication device and the desired destination received by the server, the server determines directions to be communicated to the portable

¹ Although 38 claims are in the application as originally filed, the present Office Action only specifically refers to 37 claims. However, it appears that claim 38 was discussed, without reference to the claim number, at the middle of page 7 of the Office Action. Applicants infer from that discussion that the Examiner intended to reject claim 38 in view of the Hofmann reference. That apparently intended rejection is traversed below.

device. The server then transmits the directions to the portable communication device. Thus the present system, unlike Hofmann's system, includes transmitting direction information to the portable communication device carried by the user.

In other words, in Hofmann's system the portable device is used essentially as an input device only, with the fixed indicator 20 being used to provide output of the requested direction to the user. By contrast, in the system of the present invention, the portable device is used both for input and to provide the requested output to the user.

Some embodiments of the present invention include other features not present in Hofmann's system. At least some of these other features will also be discussed below with reference to some of the claims.

Turning now to specific claim language, it is noted that claim 1 as now amended is directed to a "method for providing directions" which includes "receiving information identifying a current location of a portable communication device having short range wireless communication capability", "identifying a direction of movement to be communicated to the portable communication device to direct it towards a destination" and "transmitting the direction of movement to the portable communication device". It is noted that the amendments indicated above to claim 1 effectively include in claim 1 a limitation from former claim 2 and also specify that the communication device is a portable communication device.

From the above discussion of Hofmann's system, it will be appreciated that the Hofmann reference fails to disclose the limitation of claim 1 regarding "transmitting the direction of movement to the portable communication device". To the contrary, in Hofmann's system, the portable device communicates the user's desired destination to the direction indicator 20, but the indicator 20 does not transmit the direction of movement back to the portable device. Rather, the indicator directly visually signals the direction to the user via an illuminated arrow. It is therefore respectfully submitted that claim 1, at least as now amended, is patentably distinguished from the Hofmann reference.

Claims 3-23 are directly or indirectly dependent on claim 1 and are therefore believed to be patentable over the Hofmann reference on the same basis as claim 1. Moreover, at least some

of these dependent claims recite additional features that support an additional basis of patentability over the Hofmann reference.

For example, claim 5 recites the additional limitation of, “defining multiple regions within which a direction of movement of the portable communication device can be detected”. It is noted that the Hofmann reference fails to disclose detecting a direction of movement of a portable communication device.

Similarly, claim 15 recites, “tracking the direction of movement of the portable communication device relative to the destination”. Again, the Hofmann reference does not teach or suggest tracking movement of a portable communication device. Since claims 16 and 17 are dependent on claim 15, this additional ground of patentability is also applicable to claims 16 and 17.

Claim 29 is an independent apparatus claim that has been amended in similar fashion to claim 1. Claim 29 is submitted as patentable on the same basis as claim 1. Claims 31-34 are dependent on claim 29 and are submitted as patentable on the same basis as claim 29.

Claim 35 is an independent apparatus claim directed to a “system of providing directions” which includes “means for receiving information concerning an obstruction in a directional route provided to a communication device having short range wireless communication capability” and “means for determining an alternate direction of movement for the communication device to direct it towards a destination”.

Applicants respectfully urge that the Hofmann reference fails to teach or suggest means for “receiving information concerning an obstruction”. Applicants note that in discussing claim 35 the Examiner has stated (at page 6 of the Office Action) that claim 35 is “interpreted and rejected as set forth as claim 7”. Applicants are puzzled by this statement, since the language of claim 35 is quite different from the language of claim 7. In any case, the Examiner went on to refer to the specific language of claim 35 and to cite a passage at column 7, line 54 to column 8, line 65 of the Hofmann reference. However, this passage has nothing to do with “receiving information concerning an obstruction” as recited in claim 35. Rather, this passage of the reference is generally concerned with (a) the indicator 20 broadcasting a signal requesting destination codes from portable devices, and with (b) how to deal with cases in which two or

more portable devices simultaneously transmit destination codes to the indicator 20. Again, this has nothing to do with information concerning an obstruction. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claim 35 be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Claim 36 is dependent on claim 35 and is submitted as patentable on the same basis as claim 35.

As noted in footnote 1 (page 7 of this paper), the Examiner has not explicitly addressed the patentability of claim 38. However, in a passage of the present Office Action at the middle of page 7 thereof, the Examiner appears to cite a passage of the Hofmann reference in connection with the language of claim 38. It therefore appears that the Examiner intended to reject claim 38 as anticipated by the Hofmann reference. Applicants will now traverse this intended rejection for reasons set forth below.

Claim 38 is an independent apparatus claim that is directed to a "system of providing directions" which includes "means for receiving information concerning an obstruction in a directional route provided to a communication device having short range wireless communication capability" and "means for determining whether a people flow problem exists".

It is noted that the passage of Hofmann cited by the Examiner in connection with this language is the same as the passage cited by the Examiner in connection with claim 35. As noted in the above discussion of claim 35, this passage only deals with the indicator soliciting destination codes and dealing with conflicting destination codes. This passage contains no disclosure of "receiving information concerning an obstruction", nor does the balance of the Hofmann reference. It is therefore submitted that claim 38 is patentable over the Hofmann reference.

Rejections under 35 USC § 103(a)

Claims 11-12 and 37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hofmann.


Claims 11 and 12 are dependent on claim 1 and are believed to be patentable over the Hofmann reference for the same reasons given above with respect to claim 1. Similarly, claim 37 is dependent on claim 35 and is believed to be patentable over the Hofmann reference for the same reasons given above with respect to claim 35.

Conclusion

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request allowance of the pending claims. If any issues remain, or if the Examiner has any further suggestions for expediting allowance of the present application, the Examiner is kindly invited to contact the undersigned via telephone at (203) 972-3460.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date



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